

Message Text

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ACTION M-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 INR-10 SS-10 BAL-03 PER-05 ABF-01

AF-10 RSR-01 RSC-01 /070 W

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R 221340 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4348

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 1023

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OGEN, MT, PINR

SUBJECT: OPRED - DOD PROPOSAL TO ADD NAVAL ATTACHE UNIT AT TUNIS

FROM AMBASSADOR

REF: STATE 93934

1. I AM AWARE, OF COURSE, THAT NAVY HAS RAISED QUESTION IN PAST AS TO WHETHER DATT MALTA, WHO IS CONCURRENTLY NAVAL ATTACHE TUNIS, MIGHT BETTER BE LOCATED IN TUNIS. WHEN I ARRIVED IN MALTA LAST YEAR, WE WERE IN MIDDLE OF UK- MALTA BASE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS, AND BRITISH MILITARY SERVICES WERE IN PROCESS OF WITHDRAWING FROM MALTA AGAINST POSSIBILITY OF A FAILURE OF NEGOTIATIONS. AT THAT TIME, DATT WAS A SENIOR NAVY CAPTAIN WHO HAD SERVED 4 YEARS IN MALTA. HE WAS INVALUABLE TO ME FOR HIS CONTACTS, BOTH WITH THE BRITISH SERVICES AS WELL AS OTHER ELEMENTS ON MALTA. HE COULD NOT HAVE CARRIED OUT HIS DUTIES BY OCCASIONAL VISITS FROM TUNIS.

2. SINCE THEN SITUATION HAS MATERIALLY CHANGED. I STILL FIND THE DAO A USEFUL ELEMENT OF THE EMBASSY, AGAIN WITH ITS CONTACTS IN THE BRITISH SERVICES AS WELL AS IN MALTA ARMED FORCES. THE DAO ALSO COVERS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF VALLETTA PORT ACTIVITY WHICH IS PRESUMABLY USEFUL TO THE U. S. CONFIDENTIAL

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NAVY. ON BALANCE I BELIEVE HIS ACTIVITIES AND REPORTS JUSTIFY THE EXPENSE TO THE DOD OF KEEPING THE OFFICE HERE. ON THE OTHER HAND, I COULD NOT IN CONSCIENCE ARGUE THAT RETENTION OF RESIDENT DATT IS ESSENTIAL. BOTH I AND MY DEPUTY HAVE

REGULAR CONTACT WITH SENIOR LEVELS OF BRITISH SERVICES, AS WELL AS MALTA ARMED FORCES. THESE COULD BE EXTENDED IF NECESSARY. WHILE THE EMBASSY WITHOUT THE DAO COULD NOT DUPLICATE COVERAGE OFFERED BY LATTER, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE THE ESSENTIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND INFORMATION GATHERING NECESSARY TO OUR NATIONAL SECURITY APPARATUS. IF THE DAO WERE MOVING TO TUNIS, I ASSUME THAT HE WOULD STILL MAKE PERIODIC VISITS TO MALTA IN A PATTERN ROUGHLY REVERSE OF PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS.

3. STRICTLY FYI, PRESENT DATT HAS AT LEAST ONCE RAISED THE POSSIBILITY THAT WHEN HE DEPARTS, ASSUMING ALUSNA WOULD NOT BE ESTABLISHED IN TUNIS, FUNCTION COULD BETTER BE COVERED BY FRENCH SPEAKING OFFICER FROM MOROCCO. PRESENT DATT DOES NOT SPEAK FRENCH AND FINDS HIMSELF LIMITED IN HIS CONTACTS WHEN HE VISITS TUNIS.

4. IN SUMMARY, PRESENCE OF RESIDENT DATT IS CONVENIENT AND USEFUL, BUT I WOULD NOT FIGHT AND DIE ON THIS POINT IF DOD AND NAVY WERE TO DETERMINE THAT TUNIS WOULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE LOCATION FOR THIS NAVAL OFFICER. GETZ

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 02 APR 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 MAY 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: cunninfx
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973VALLET00010
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: VALLETTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730559/abqceahs.tel
Line Count: 77
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: n/a
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 93934
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18-Sep-2001 by elyme>; APPROVED <05-Oct-2001 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OPRED - DOD PROPOSAL TO ADD NAVAL ATTACHE UNIT AT TUNIS
TAGS: OGEN, MT, PINR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005